NING AND PROGRAMME IM PLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) The Government has decided to review the Draft Ninth Five Year Plan (1997—2002) approved at the internal meetings of the Planning Commission and released by the then Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission on March 1, 1998. Detailed action plans are already under preparation which will, upon finalisation, be integrated with the existing draft. The revised document will then be submitted, through due process, for consideration and approval of the National Development Council.

In respect of North-Eastern Region and Sikkim where benefits of economic development have not accrued in the same measure as in the rest of the country, efforts would be made through supportive measures for the development of infrastructure—both physical and social, and rapid enhancement of sustainable employment to enable the States of the North-Eastern Region and Sikkim to join the mainstream of the economic development of the country. These objectives would be appropriately pursued through the Five Year Plans and Annual Plans of these States and the Central Ministries/agencies.

Efforts have been made in the past few years for boosting development in the North East. The announcements of the former Prime Ministers regarding New Initiatives for North-Eastern Region, which include a number of infrastructure projects to be implemented in the Region are steps in this direction. In pursuance to these steps, a High Level Commission (HLC) was also set up which submitted its report on March 7, 1997. The Report of the HLC contains a number of recommendations for the development of various sectors including infrastructure in respect of each State of the North-Eatern Region.

Recently the Prime Minister met the Chief Ministers of North-Eastern States and Sikkim on 8 May, 1998 to discuss issues relating to accelerated development of these States. The steps to be taken by the Government in this regard include, inter-alia, adoption of project approach for which projects would be identified in consulation with the State Governments and North-Eastern Council (NEC), creation of a Central Pool of Resources for funding specific projects in the North-Eastern States and Sikkim for which necessry steps have been taken to propose the opening of budget head in the Central Government's budget proposals for the year 1998-99, and restructuring NEC so that it can play more active role in the economic and social transformation of these States.

(c) The Planning Commission has been advising North-Eastern States to reduce their non-plan expenditure and to widen their tax and non-tax base for generating additional resources to finance development programmes. The HLC, while recommending measures for rejuvenating the economy of the Region, has made some suggestion for additional resources mibilisation by the North-Eastern States.

Impact of Nuclear Tests on Development Programmes

1013. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what strategies Government have worked out to combat the heavy expenditure of the nuclear tests incurred on 11th and 13th May, 1998;

(b) whether Government have completely planned and worked out the strategy so that the development activities of Government may not be hampered; and

(c) whether it will affect the ongoing pro-poor programmes, the Human Resource Development, the planning of "Health for all" and "Education to all" by 2005 programmes, the infrastructural development programme, the poverty removal and employment oriented programmes, if so, to what extent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND

PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c): The nuclear tests carried out by India on 11th and 13th May, 1998 were guided by the National Security consideration. These tests are a continuation of the policies set into motion that put this country on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action. The Government is confident that initial negative responses of some of our friends to our nuclear tests will be moderated as our position gets better understood and it will not have any significant impact on our economic development.

Cost Overrun on Major Projects

1014. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country has lost over 45000.00 crores due to cost and time overrun in executing major and mega projects;

(b) If so, the extent of cost overrun on the delayed projects under various sectors of economy; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken to reduce the period between the approval and execution of the projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFARIS AND PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The Central Sector projects are approved at estimated costs corresponding to the price level existing in the year of approval. The project cost increases due to general escalation during implementation period, exchange rate variations, changes in custom duty, increase in cost of resettlement & rehabilitation and other factors. As on March, 1998 out of 230 projects costing Rs. 100 crores and above, 118 projects were delayed with respect to their latest approved dates of commissioning. The estimated cost overrun in 118 delayed major and mega projects is Rs. 16,496 crores.

(b) The extent of cost overrun and time overrun is given in the enclosed Statement (*See* Appendix 184, Annexure No. 33).

(c) The steps taken or proposed to be taken to cut delays in implementation is given in the enclosed Statement. (*See* below)

Statement

The projects face various types of problems during the course of implementation. The exact measures taken to ensure speedy and efficient implementation depend on the nature of the problems being faced by the projects. The important measures being taken in general are as follows:

—Intensive monitoring of projects on various levels. This enables the monitoring agencies to identify constraints and helps the management in taking remedial measures.

—In-depth critical review of the progress by the Project Authorities and Administrative Ministries.

—Setting up of Task Force/ Empowered Committees for speedy finalisation of contract packages, solving land acquisition and other problems.

—Close follow up by the Department of Programme Implemention concerned administrative Ministries and Project authorities with the State Governments. equipment suppliers, contractors consultants and other concerned agencies to minimise delays.

—Inter-ministerial coordination and interaction.

—Emphasis on preparation of realistic project implementation plan.

—Review by the Committee of Secretaries of the specific projects facing constraints.